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SUBJ: NEW TIMES INTERVIEWS ARAFAT, STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF
PALESTINE PROBLEM

1. SUMMARY. NEW TIMES (NO. 48) CARRIES ARAFAT
INTERVIEW WHICH STRESSES VALUE OF SOVIET SUPPORT
FOR PALESTINIAN AND ARAB CAUSE BUT SKIRTS ISSUE
OF PLO PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA. SEPARATE NEW TIMES
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ARTICLE ON ME SITUATION GIVES PRIMARY IMPORTANCE

TO RESOLUTION OF PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. ARTICLE ALSO HINTS THAT ISRAEL MIGHT "TORPEDO" GENEVA CONFERENCE AND WARNS THAT NEW OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES MAY ENSUE IF ISRAEL RETURNS TO "NO WAR-NO PEACE" POLICY. END SUMMARY.

2. ARAFAT RESPONSE TO QUESTION FROM NEW TIMES CORRESPONDENT SHMOAROV PRAISE SOVIET UNION AS TRUE FRIEND OF PALESTINIANS. HE SAYS PALESTINIANS WILL NOT FORGET THAT BREZHNEV HAS ALWAYS SUPPORTED PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND THEIR NEED TO REALIZE THEIR "LEGITIMATE NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS" WHETHER HE WAS TALKING WITH PRESIDENT NIXON, TO CONGRESS OF PEACE FORCES, OR TO TITO. ARAFAT ALSO PRAISES SOVIET ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY AID TO ARABS AND SAYS SOVIET ARMS AND MILITARY TECHNOLOGY SHOWED THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN ME WAR. ARAFAT STEERS CLEAR OF TRICKY QUESTIONS OF PLO PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA AND PLO REPRESENTATION OF PALESTINIANS.

3. IN GENERAL REVIEW OF ME SITUATION WRITE (MIRSKIY) SAYS CONDITIONS FOR ME PEACE BETTER NOW THAN BEFORE, BUT WARNS READERS NOT TO FORGET THAT PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IS FIRST CAUSE OF CONFLICT AND THAT WITHOUT RESTORATION OF PALESTINIAN LEGITIMATE RIGHTS ATTAINMENT OF ME PEACE IS NOT POSSIBLE.

4. MIRSKIY GOES ON TO SAY THAT IF ISRAEL DOES NOT "TORPEDO" IT, ME PEACE CONFERENCE MAY BEGIN IN NEAR FUTURE. HE NOTES, HOWEVER, THAT CONVOCAION OF CONFERENCE DOES NOT MEAN ACHIEVEMENT OF SETTLEMENT. AND HE WARNS THAT ISRAEL MAY AGAIN TRY TO RETURN TO "NO WAR-NO PEACE" COURSE WHICH HE ASSERTS RISKS RENEWAL OF HOSTILITIES.

5. COMMENT: ARAFAT INTERVIEW AND MIRSKIY COMMENT, WITHOUT DEPARTING FROM SOVIET LOW-KEY TREATMENT OF PALESTINIANS, REAFFIRM THAT SOVIETS SEE PALESTINIANS AS POTENTIAL LEVER TO ASSURE THEIR FULL INVOLVEMENT IN ME PEACE SETTLEMENT. MIRSKIY ARTICE SUGGESTION THAT ISRAEL MIGHT SABOTAGE CONFERENCE ALSO APPEARS TO PREPARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GROUND FOR LAYING ANY BREAKDOWN IN CONFERNECE SQUARELY AT ISRAEL'S FEET.
DUBS

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